

51
monthly
HAMMER'S

CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF - told in comics!

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HORROR

HOUSE OF

Fantastic
Collector's Item
1st ISSUE

featuring...

BORIS KARLOFF

•

VINCENT PRICE

•

HISTORY
OF HAMMER

•

PSYCHO
STABBING

•

GEORGE
ROMERO
INTERVIEW



plus lots more from the world's top horror artists and writers!



One of Hammer Films' now classic pieces of master monster make-up, *The Gorgon* (1964). Stay with us and, in months to come, you'll be privileged to see the tricks behind *The Gorgon*, *The Werewolf*, *Dracula*, *The Mummy* and friends in our exclusive interview with Hammer make-up genius, Roy Ashton.

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HAMMER'S HOUSE OF HORROR, March 1978 Issue.

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Editorial

Welcome to the first issue of HoH, quite probably the world's largest-selling movie monster magazine!

Confused? How do we know it's a top seller if this is our first issue? Read on, and all will be made clear. . . .

Back in late 1975 a meeting took place deep in the heart of London's movie world, in the fabled Hammer House (home of all the great Dracula, Frankenstein and Mummy films). And from that came a new movie magazine, **The House of Hammer**.

Over the following months, HoH soared in popularity, gaining readers in Britain, Australia, and most of Europe.

And now, at last, you too can share the secrets, the suspense and the marvellous monsters that appear in the entitled **HOUSE OF HORROR**.

To attempt to sandwich our last 18 issues into an HoH crash-course, this first American issue brings you some of the best material we've ever run in **House of Hammer**.

Starting next month, you'll be seeing the very same magazine that is being read and

enjoyed by the rest of the world.

The completists among you, eager to catch up on our last 18 issues in full, should turn to our **House of Hammer** back issue special offer on page 51 this issue.

Next month we'll be presenting another *Five Hellings' Terror Tale*; Hammer's **The Reptile** told in comics (by this issue's cover artist, Brian Lewis); Barbara Steele in **Revenge of the Blood Beast**; History of Hammer Films Part 2; Fact File on **The Reptile**; plus regular HoH columns . . . *Mondo Marabou* (all the latest fantasy film, book and magazine news); *Answer Desk*; *Post Mortem*; and lots more.

As the latter two columns are readers' comments (questions on cinema, and letters about HoH), let's hear from you. Not only could you be the first American reader to have your letter printed, but we even award free subscriptions and free books for the best letters published.

Cheerio!



Roy Scheider
Editor

HOUSE OF HAMMER



SUBSCRIPTION OFFER

Each and every month, HoH brings you 32 action-packed pages of cover-strips, features, interviews, news and views of the horror film world. Plus lots of rare, never before seen photos of the world's most famous monsters and the men who create them.

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THE CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF

CERTIFICATE X

STARRING

OLIVER REED

as Leon (The Werewolf)

WITH

CLIFFORD EVANS.....Don Alfredo Cervato

HIRA TALFEY.....Teresa

CATHERINE FELLER.....Christina

YVONNE ROMAIN.....Julia's Daughter

RICHARD WORDSWORTH.....The Beggar

WARRER MITCHELL.....Pope Valerius

Directed by TERENCE FISHER, Screenplay

by JOHN ELDER (from the novel "The

Werewolf of Paris" by Guy Endore), Pro-

duced by ANTHONY HINDS. Released by

Hammer (USA: Universal)

A HAMMER FILM PRODUCTION

LIFE IS ALWAYS HARD FOR A BEGGAR, ESPECIALLY SO IN EIGHTEENTH CENTURY SPAIN. BUT FOR ONE DETERMINED WRETCH LIFE SEEMS TO BE LOOKING UP... FOR HE HAS STUMBLERED INTO A WEDDING FEAST AT THE CASTLE SANMESTRO, AND ON THAT DAY, THE STRAUBENCHED OLD MARQUESS BEINGS DISPOSED TOWARD KINDNESS...

HOW MUCH DO YOU WANT FOR YOURSELF, BEGGAR? TEN PESETAS?

TEN PESETAS? THANK YOU, MY LORD!

UNWITTING THAT HE HAS JUST SOLD HIMSELF, BODY AND SOUL, FOR A MERE PINTURE, THE BEGGAR ENJOYS THE UNEXPECTED KINDNESS... AND WISHES WHAT HE CAN TO REPAY THE KINDNESS...

COME ON, WRETCH! BRANCE! MAKE US LAUGH!

TIME IS BEHIND! I THINK I'VE ENDED! SEEING THE BEGGAR IS GIVEN SUITABLE ACCOMMODATION UNTIL I SEND FOR HIM AGAIN!

BUT THE MARQUESS NEVER DEES SEND FOR HIM AGAIN. MANY YEARS PASS BY... YEARS OF LONELINESS, SORROW AND DROGGING...

DROGGING, PERHAPS ABOUT THE ONLY OTHER PERSON HE EVER SAID...

... THE JAILER'S MUTE DAUGHTER, WHO BRINGS HIM HIS FOOD ... WHEN SHE GETS THE TIME AWAY FROM HER DUTIES AS A MAID ...



TIME HAS REVANGED THE MARQUES, TOO ... TURNING HIM INTO A FRIENDLESS, MAD OLD BOSS ... BUT EVEN TIME HAS NOT BEEN ABLE TO REFORM HIS RAIGRE ...

HEH, HEH! COME ON, MY DEAR ... A LITTLE AGGS, AND THEN ...

UH- UHH!



THE MARQUES TUGS ON A BELL-ROPE ...

HAVE THAT GRL LOCKED UP UNTIL SHE LEARNS SOME BETTER MANNERS!



ONLY ONE CELL IS AVAILABLE, AND SO THE OLD BOSS ... IS FINALLY SENT A EDMP'NION ... NO MORE TRIVIAL MERE COMPANION ...



BUT FOR THE WIRE GIRL, THERE IS NO WAY TO CALL FOR RESCUE ... NO ESCAPE FROM A MAN KEPT ALONE FOR FIFTEEN YEARS!



AT LAST, ABUSED AND ANIMATED, SHE IS RELEASED ... ONLY TO FIND FURTHER HORRORS IN STORE ...



AND THIS TIME THE PROSPECT IS TOO REVOLTING TO ENDURE ...



AND SO ...

AAUUUGH!



AFTER THAT, THERE IS NOTHING FOR THE GIRL TO DO BUT FLEE ... SHE LIES WILD IN THE WOODS FOR A TIME, UNTIL, ON THE POINT OF DEATH BY EXHAUSTION SHE IS FOUND BY ALFRED CARRO, A LOCAL WRITER ...

HOLY SAINTS! WHAT'S THIS?



LEONDO IS A KIND, GENTLE MAN... PERHAPS THE FIRST THE GIRL HAS EVER MET... AND AT LAST SHE HAS A REAL HOME...

THE POOR GIRL CAN'T SPEAK... CAN'T TELL US WHAT SHE'S SUFFERED... BUT IT MUST HAVE BEEN TERRIBLE!

IT'S A BOY THEN, TERESA? EXCELLENT!

STILL THAT'S OVER NOW... YOU'LL LOOK AFTER HER, TERESA!

AND TERESA'S HOUSEKEEPER DOES LOOK AFTER THE GIRL THROUGH MANY MONTHS... MONTHS THAT CLIMAX WITH THE BEGGAR'S FINAL LEGACY... BABY BOY... BORN ON CHRISTMAS DAY!

NO, SENOR, IT'S VERY UNLUCKY... AN UNWANTED CHILD BORN ON OUR LORD'S BIRTHDAY IS AN INSULT TO HEAVEN!

AND THE POOR GIRL WAS DYED IN CHILDHOOD... WHO KNOWS WHAT WILL HAPPEN NOW?

BUT IT SEEMS TERESA'S FEARS ARE UNFOUNDED, AS LITTLE LEON DEVELOPS INTO A HEALTHY, BUT SLIGHTLY WITHDRAWN BOY...

I'M NOT HUNGRY, AUNT TERESA...

BUT LEON, YOU MUST EAT... WE CAN'T HAVE YOU LOSING YOUR APPETITE!

VERY NASTY... THERE MUST BE A WOLF ABOUT!

OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE STANDS PEPE, THE LOCAL HUNTER... IT IS HIS JOB TO PROTECT THE FLOCK... AND NOW THEY NEED PROTECTION!

PEPE'S FIRST DUTY IS TO REPORT TO THE MAYOR... BUT THAT DOESN'T STOP HIM RAISING FOR A FEW MINUTES' GOSSIP...

A DEAD GOAT, YOU SAY? LITTLE LEON'S KITTEN WAS KILLED TOO... I DON'T CARE SHOW IT TO HIM...

THAT EVENING, PEPE IS OUT ON HIS HOUNDS AGAIN... AND THIS TIME HE IS READY...

THERE IT IS, NOW I'LL GET IT!

ALMOST PAINTED WHEN TOOK HIM HUNTING WITH ME A FEW DAYS AGO... I THOUGHT HE'D ENJOY IT, BUT STILL I'VE GOT TO BE OFF!

HE CAN'T STAND THE SIGHT OF BLOOD CAN HE...?

KA-JOOM!



IN A SMALL VILLAGE LIKE THIS, THERE IS ONLY ONE MAN OF WISDOM TO TURN TO... THE PRIEST!

SOMETIMES A SPIRIT CAN ENTER THE BODY AT BIRTH, AND WAR WITH THE SOUL FOR CONTROL. AND IF THE SOUL SHOULD BE WEAKENED, THE SPIRIT TAKES OVER. FOR LEON, THE SPIRIT IS A WOLF... AND IT TIMES OF THE FULL MOON...





UNLESS IT'S NOT AN ORDINARY WOLF... BUT TO MAKE A KILL THEM I'VE NEED A VERY SPECIAL BULLET...



THAT SHOULD DO IT... A BULLET OF BLESSED SILVER! NOW WE'LL SEE WHAT WE CAN CATCH!



WHEN NIGHT COMES, THE MOON IS STILL ALMOST FULL... AND THE HUNTER SETS OFF IN PURSUIT OF HIS QUARRY...



BUT LITTLE LEON FAILS TO KEEP HIS APPOINTMENT WITH FATE...

LEON!
LEON!



IT'LL BE ALL RIGHT NOW, TERESA... HE JUST NEEDS REST...



BUT IF IT IS NOT LEON, WHAT IS IT THAT OLD POPE SEES... HIMS / T... AND SHOOTS...?

GOT YOU!

SO IT WAS DOMINIQUE'S SNEEPCOG... MUST HAVE GONE WILD! I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN!



THE ATTACKS STOP AFTER THAT, AND IT SEEMS THE DOG MUST HAVE BEEN RESPONSIBLE... THE YEARS PASS, BUT PAPA'S STILL WORRY THAT SILVER BULLET AROUND HIS NECK TO REMIND HIMSELF OF WHAT HE MIGHT HAVE HAD TO DEAL WITH...

WITH THE LOVING CARE OF ALFREDO AND TERESA, LEON PULLS HIS TENDRILS BEHIND HIM AND GROWS INTO A NORMAL YOUNG MAN, AND, LIKE ALL YOUNG MEN, EVENTUALLY LEAVES HOME TO LOOK FOR WORK...



COME BACK IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE PLACE...

I WILL, AUNT TERESA... I PROMISE...

BUT LEON'S ARRIVAL AT THE VINEYARD OF DON FERNANDO FERNANDEZ DOES NOT GET OFF TO A GOOD START...



BUT LEON IS TAKEN IN, AND GIVEN A JOB IN THE BOTTLING ROOM WITH ANOTHER WORKER, JOSE...



THIS IS WHERE YOU'LL WORK... FROM SEVEN TO TEN WITH HALF AN HOUR FOR LUNCH... YOU SLEEP HERE, TOO...

AND WE GET SIX PESETAS? JUST FOR PUTTING WINE INSIDE THE BOTTLES AND LABELS OUTSIDE?



AND THEN, SURPRISINGLY...

SENOR, I'VE COME TO APOLOGISE FOR SPLASHING YOU EARLIER. I'M CHRISTINA FERNANDEZ...

THERE'S NO NEED TO APOLOGISE, SENORITA...



LOVE STRIKES SWIFTLY, AND MAKES NO DISTINCTIONS AND SO, IN THE NIGHTS THAT FOLLOW...

CHRISTINA! HURRY... BEFORE YOUR FATHER SEES YOU...!



IT SEEMS LEON WAS FINALLY FINDING THE GIRL WHO WILL CURE HIM FOR ALL TIME OF THE TERRIBLE HORROR THAT WARS WITH HIS SOUL...

I CAN'T SEE YOU TOMORROW, LEON... BUT I'LL BE HERE ON SUNDAY...

BUT I CAN'T BEAR TO BE AWAY FROM YOU, CHRISTINA... COME AWAY... WE'LL BE MARRIED...



BUT FATE NOW DEALS A HAMMER BLOW...

I CAN'T MARRY YOU, LEON... I'M ALREADY BETHROTHED TO RICO DOMEL... I WON'T EVER BE ABLE TO MARRY YOU!

SATURDAY NIGHT SEES LEON TRYING TO DROWN HIS GRIEF WITH JOSE... AT AN INFAMOUS TAVERN NOT FAR FROM THE VINEYARD...



YOU DON'T LOOK WELL, DEARIE... COME OUTSIDE FOR SOME FRESH AIR...



LEON IS STILL DWELLING ON HIS REJECTION... BUT THE GIRL CAN'T KNOW THAT...

I DON'T FEEL...

WISHING ON THE MOON I WISH SOMETHING NICE FOR ME WHILE YOU'RE AT IT!

WHY, DEARIE - I...?



LEON! LEON! WHERE ARE YOU, WHAT THE...

OH, MY GOD!

But just only finds... that the nightmare has begun again!

THE GOLDEN AGE OF HORROR
featuring

BORIS KARLOFF

In *Doris Gifford's* highly acclaimed "Golden Age of Horror" series in *Holt 2-1*, one outstanding installment which we re-present looks at the effect Boris Karloff had on the movie industry with his portrayal as Mary Shelley's classic Frankenstein Monster.

THE paragraph in *Film Weekly* for the 25th of July, 1931, was short and to the point, a snidely amusing post typical of the gossip press of the period. Thirty little words, set sixteenth in a string of second-class squibs aptly entitled "Rest of the News in Brief". How many of the readers of "The National Guide to Films" gave it more than a short snort, that Saturday morning 45 years ago? Yet from it stemmed a trail of terror the likes of which the screen had never seen. And in the tail of those thirty words, a sting of pure poison.

Bela Lugosi, who will play the leading role in *Frankenstein*, earned his first money for holding a girl's dog while she sat on a park bench and blazed her swathe.

Whether the tale of the dog was true or not matters little now. Perhaps it was a concoction of a forgotten Universal Studio publicist under instructions from above to harmonize their contract vampire For Bela Lugosi, for a top box-office star, was receiving markedly little in the way of publicity in the popular fan-mags. Perhaps this minimal adulation was upsetting that one-time Romeo from romantic Hungary. His previous press plug had been even less stirring: "Bela Lugosi the Hungarian actor has become a naturalized American" (July the third). The pathetic twist would come years later, as we re-read the paragraph with hindsight. For Lugosi rejected the role of the Frankenstein Monster out of hand, claiming dislike for the makeup and objecting to the lack of dialogue. A decade later, aged and suffering from drugged pain, he would be glad to accept the role and to be made up in the image of the man who took over the Monster in the original film. The man who became a star because of Lugosi's high-handed turn-down. Boris Karloff: the man a monster made.

One week after their "News in Brief" piece, *Film Weekly* promoted the new pro-

duction to a scare headline: "New Talkie Horrors!" with the sub-head "Spine-chilling Pictures on the Way."

Hollywood is now determined to exploit the most primitive of all human emotions, fear. Greater than love, only a little less than love, fear has swayed the decision of mankind throughout the ages. The film-makers realize this, and a series of three talkies offered by Universal bears ample testimony to the variety of which fear films are capable.

Following a hefty, hair-raising plug for *Dracula*, generally released on Monday, August the third, the writer went on.

Then there is to be *Frankenstein*, the story of a mad-scientist man, an obsession which passes beyond human control and, turning on its creator, averages itself for its very



The classic face of the classic monster, invention, before rising amok among other terrified men.

There was no mention this time of Bela Lugosi as the Monster. Seven days later there was more news under the heading "Britain to Lose Joazeff's Mad Hero". Colin Clive ('yet another front rank actor') had been offered a contract by Universal Pictures.

His first part will be the 'Monster' hero of *Frankenstein*, Mrs Shelley's eerie story of a

man-made human being. He will have the option of remaining in Hollywood for five years at a princely salary.

Clive was released from his West End success, *Crimo at Housens*, and on September the fifth made it into the columns of *Film Weekly* once again. This time they had it right:

Colin Clive flew from New York to Hollywood to be in time to begin work in the title role of *Frankenstein*. The complete journey from London occupied the record time of only seven and a half days.

The same day Carl Laemmle, the Universal "Uncle", arrived in London for discussions with his biographer, John Drinkwater. Characteristically Laemmle wasted no opportunity for publicity, and his press statement was headlined "Stealing Britain's Thunder, Colin Laemmle Pleased with Theft of James Whale and Colin Clive." The two Englishmen had become associated through the original stage production of R. C. Sheriff's unworked war play, *Joazeff's Mad*. As producer and actor (Clive played Captain Starhope) they had risen together like rockets. After taking two tickets to America to work on the tailor version of the play, Whale had stayed on to direct *Watson's Bridge*, another 'British' Great War picture, for Universal. Given the standard second picture to direct, Whale had selected *Frankenstein*, a property gathering dust since Lugosi's walk-out. Said Laemmle:

"Mr Whale is now directing *Frankenstein* at Universal City. When this production was first mooted, it was he who suggested sending to London for Colin Clive to interpret the part of the Monster. Americans have been extremely keen on Colin Clive ever since his magnificent performance in *Joazeff's Mad*, and I thought that it would be a good thing if he were brought back into films."

But as the Monster? Did Whale really consider his handsome friend perfect for the part of a revived corpse? Or was Uncle Carl making the same mistake as so many moviegoers would: equating the "title role" of *Frankenstein* with the Monster? Three weeks later and the facts were there in full. Doszovan Peddy, himself fated to become a film director (sobit a Quota Quickie King) in the fullness of



first, was dubbed Film Weekly's Special Representative in Hollywood. In his series of full page reports 'A Loner in Hollywood' (Podcity was actually an Irishman), came one date lined September 26, 1931, and headlined 'Horror Film Made in Secret!'

The current secrets of the film city are, for once, not who it is done with whom, but what two men look like. Two 'horror' films are being made with a decent reverence rare in film production. At Paramount's Hollywood studio Fredric March is doing his transformation from the dance Dr Jekyll to the hideous Mr Hyde in 'boxed-up' sets. At the Universal studios, Boris Karloff, playing the synthetic monster 'made' from fresh corpses in Frankenstein, is under an oath of secrecy. Once made up he is not allowed to leave the studio or see visitors until the makeup is removed. His journeys to and from his dressing-room and the sound-proofed stages are made with a hood over his head and face, and with gloves covering his hands. His meals are served to him in private.

Boris Karloff! The name had a weird enough ring, but also a familiar one, to the keenest of picturegoers of those early Thirties. Those who went to the Marble Arch Pavilion on October the seventeenth might have caught a quick preview of the shape of things to come: Karloff played Frankie Darro's father in *The Mad Genius*, John Barrymore's follow-up to

Loose, the creature stalks along the timbers, his mind filled with fear.



Right: The creature pleads for understanding.



Wailing help and getting none, the Monster finally turns on his creator.

Svengali, a tale of a mesmeric, club-footed dancer. Others may have called to mind the dark-skinned, gaunt-faced villain of countless epics of the northwoods, piracy, and Bombay, California. It was the face of the crew-catted convict of *The Criminal Code*, now the murderous minion of Graft, that James Whale saw leeching in the Universal cornucopia and began doodling on the tablecloth. (In his hunger days, Whale had been something of a caricaturist for the theatrical papers of London.)

'Boris Karloff's face had always fascinated me, and I made drawings of his head, added sharp, bony ridges where I imagined the skull might have joined. His physique was weaker than I could wish, but that queer, penetrating personality of his, I felt, was more important than his shape, which could easily be altered.'

Easily perhaps for the costume designer and the make-up man; less easily for the actor. Humble Karloff, the British-born William Henry Pratt of Dulwich, of Kings College and Kamloops, Canada, was a veteran extra, bit player and character man of 44 years and 69 films, not counting the chapters to several serials.

In and out of Hollywood from 1928, the promise of stardom in 1931 sparked little response in his tough old body, tanned yet already bending at the legs. He sat through three weeks of hell in the make-up chair while Jack P. Pierce, unsung genius of the patty and the paint, and James Whale, blossoming in his new-found directorial power, built up and tore down venison after version of Mary Shelley's made-up Monster. Pierce's original concept, worked out with the film's first slaved director Robert Florey, had been an adaptation of Paul Wegener's *Golem*, the legendary clay man of medieval Prague. It was the original make-up that had so offended Lugosi. Working with Whale, a more original

alent, Pierce took the creation of Frankenstein's Monster more seriously.

I did some research in anatomy, surgery, criminology, ancient and modern burial customs, and electro-dynamics. I discovered there are six ways a surgeon can cut a skull, and I figured Dr Frankenstein, who was not a practicing surgeon, would take the easiest. That is, he would cut the top of the skull off, straight across like a pot lid, hinge it, pop the brain in, and clamp it tight. That's the reason I decided to make the Monster's head square and flat like a box, and dip that big scar across his forehead, and have metal clamps hold it together. The two metal studs that stick out the sides of his rock are inlets for electricity—plugs! The Monster is an electrical gadget and lightning is his life force!

The Monster was nothing of the sort, and Karloff knew it. A well educated man, he would have read and understood Mary Shelley's classic novel, subtitled as it was



The monster frightens Frankenstein's bride



A fantastic shot of Frankenstein's laboratory as the Monster is about to come to life.

The Modern Prometheus despite Universal, who subtitled their production *The Man Who Made a Monster*. He was an actor, too, or rather An Actor: a Man of the Theatre, with a style and tradition not yet totally killed by the Motion Picture Karloff carried within him that dying technique, the extension of Drama known as Melodrama. Overdone as many of his "straight" performances would come to seem, when set against the naturalistic playing of his modern talkie contemporaries, he nevertheless vested his characterizations with thought, depth, and humanity. Even his Monsters. And because of this his final performance of the

Frankenstein Monster still stands head and electronics above any of the many that have followed in his asphalt-spreaders boots. Said Karloff:

"The Monster was inarticulate, and I had to make him understood. When the audience first sees him he is only five hours old. My first problem was not to let his eyes be too intelligent, which is why I decided to use the false eye-lids that half veil the eyes."

Jack Pierce took the idea, cut half moons out of rubber and stuck them to Karloff's eyeballs with spirit gum. Karloff's one personal touch to his make-up. The rest was Pierce, working to Whale's sketches. Again

and again new make-ups were tried and abandoned. One, with clipped goggles in the forehead, seemed final and was photographed by the Universal stunts department for use in publicity, posters and promotion. When the film was finally shown, the clips had disappeared: the make-up had been changed yet again!

Patently Karloff bore it all, the pain and the carelessness, the soreness and the heat. He was too much the veteran to even dare hope that the film would come off, let alone that it would feature him. But the work and the pain paid off, and bit by bit the film was made. And in the end, Karloff was made, too.

Years before, Hollywood's original Monster star, Lon Chaney, had talked with Karloff, encouraging the bit-part player when he was low: "Find something to one else can or will do, and they'll begin to take notice of you. The secret of success in Hollywood lies in being different from anyone else." With Chaney dead and Lugosi scoring the genre, Karloff stood alone, and became a star.

This was a pathetic creature who, like us all, had neither wish nor way in its creation, and certainly did not wash upon itself the hideous image which anatomically terrified humans whom it tried to befriend. The most heart-rending aspect of the creature's life was his ultimate desertion by his creator. It was as though man, in his blundering, searching attempt to improve himself, was to find himself deserted by his God.

Karloff, created by Universal, Laemmle, Whale and Pierce, was deserted by his "collective God": they did not even invite him to the preview!

Film Weekly could hardly be expected to approve. *Frankenstein* was previewed at Santa Barbara in November and a special dispatch from Donovan Fedely was flushed to the front page of the National Guide to Films. "Stop Crude Sensationalism!" screamed a banner line, and the subhead was "Nightmare Film." "Not the kind of entertainment about which I am likely to write enthusiastic paragraphs when I see it," wrote Editor Herbert Thompson.

Boris Karloff's make-up of the "synthetic man" pieced together from corpses in the most brilliantly horrible ever achieved on the screen. It is almost impossible to look at his apparently scarred, stitched, and skinned skin (the shaver is to hold his head on his spine) without believing that his body has really been sewn, splined, and glued together. . . . It has no thorns and points no sword, but is simply a shocker beside which the Grand Giallo was a kindergarten.

Frankenstein opened at the Tivoli, London, on Monday the 25th January, 1931. London survived, but the cinema—and indeed Boris Karloff—was never the same again.

Soon to be published, *The Golden Age of Meyer* as a hardback book. Watch for it!

Witch



Witchfinder General

Feature by John Fleming
(US Title: The Conqueror Worm)

The *Guardian* talked of 'gratuitous sadism'. To Dilys Powell of the *Sunday Times* it was 'peculiarly nauseating'; Margaret Hinxman of the *Sunday Telegraph* called it a 'sadistic extravaganza'. John Russell Taylor in *The Times* wrote: 'The coding of the film has an all-out passion and intensity unlike anything else in the British cinema.'

... *Witchfinder General* ends with the central character being hacked to death with an axe and having one of his eyes kicked out.

The film tells us that in 1645, the Civil War is tearing England apart and law has collapsed. Matthew Hopkins, the son of a Suffolk minister, rides through East Anglia seeking out supposed witches, hanging, burning or mutilating them. He's the self-styled *Witchfinder General*.

The story has its roots in facts. In a time when the average wage was

six old pence a day, Hopkins earned up to £25 for visiting a village. In his short career, he is reckoned to have made about £1000. One contemporary wrote that Hopkins and his henchman John Stearne sent more people to the gallows in fourteen months than all the other English witch hunters had managed in the preceding 160 years. Michael Reeves' film was based on a fictionalised biography by Ronald Bassett; it starred Vincent Price in the title role.

BURN, WITCH, BURN!

Richard Marshall is a young and compassionately innocent Roundhead. After killing his first enemy soldier, he rides home on leave to visit his sweetheart Sara. She is the niece of John Lowes, the elderly parson of Brambleton, Suffolk. (The village seen in the film is Lavenham.) The parson

is a kindly man with leanings towards High Church Protestantism and that, in this strongly Cromwellian area, makes him immediately suspect and disliked.

Richard gets Lowes' permission to marry Sara and he rides happily off to re-join his regiment. In the twilight, his path crosses that of Messrs. Hopkins and Stearne. He directs them to the village, unaware of who they are.

When they arrive at Brambleton, they start slaughtering people. Lowes is tortured and thrown in a cell. He would have been killed but his life is saved by Sara, who seduces Hopkins. Her uncle's life seems safe.

But while Hopkins is absent from the village, the brutish Stearne rapes her. On his return, Hopkins hears of what has happened. He takes his revenge not on Stearne but indirectly on Sara. Her life is spared but her uncle is killed.

As a matter of historical fact, at the 1645 Suffolk Sessions in Bury St. Edmunds, John Lowes, the 72 year old parson of Bramson (sic), was tried for witchcraft. He had confessed after a going-over by teams of Matthew Hopkins' assistants. According to Bishop Francis Hutcheson, they kept Lowes awake 'several nights together, and ran him backwards and forwards about the room until he was out of breath. Then they rested him a little and then ran him again. And thus they did for several days and nights together, till he was weary of his life and was scarce sensible of what he said or did.'

Lowes confessed he had covenanted with the devil, suckled familiars and bewitched cattle. He later retracted his confession and, not allowed a clergyman, recited the funeral service for himself as he walked to the scaffold.



John Stearne (Robert Russell) and Matthew Hopkins (Vincent Price) are stopped by Roundheads as they travel from town to town, destroying supposed witches.



A victim of the witchfinders' 'abusing'. A supposed witch is tortured to confess her alliance with the Devil.

The real Matthew Hopkins' methods were to deprive victims of food and sleep and to run them around a room so that their feet blistered. Few took more than five days to confess.

In the movie, his methods are more direct, far more horrifying. Director Michael Reeves defended his film by saying: 'Violence is horrible, degrading and sordid. It should be presented as such—and the more people it shocks into sickened recognition of these facts the better.'

British film censor John Trevelyan knew Reeves personally and accepted the director's good intentions. But, Trevelyan argued, 'The film gave the impression that it was exploiting violence, and in particular sadism, for commercial reasons.' He said that he had never known background music to heighten violence so significantly. (Composer Paul Ferris appears as the 'young husband' in the film).

The movie was cut extensively by the British censors. They removed four minutes of what they called 'excesses of sadistic brutality'. Reeves resisted the censorship vigorously and refused to take part in the cutting. But, when he saw the result, he told



Having confessed, the 'witch' is destroyed. Her smoldering bonfire, held fast against a ladder.

Trevlyan that the film had not been harmed nearly as much as he had expected.

America's Daily Cinema wrote of the censured end-result: "Rarely has so much blood been seen to flow, such a variety of tortures been practiced or so many hangings been carried out before the camera." Victims are drugged in the meat and roasted on the bonfire.

When Richard (Ian Ogilvy, who had starred in Reeves' other two films and is now the TV Saint) hears of the events at Brandesten, he rides there to find Lowes dead and Sara cowering and defiled in the desecrated church. Hopkins and Stearns are already far away.

Richard marries Sara and swears total vengeance. When Hopkins deserts his assistant Stearns in the face of Army opposition, Stearns too is out for blood. Hopkins continues burning witches without assistance for a while. But then he re-enters with Stearns and, knowing Richard is trying to hunt them down, they frame both him and Sara as witches.

The most famous sequence in *Witchfinder General* (and one of the



John Lowes, an elderly parson, opposes Hopkins' cruel methods. Hopkins' assistant, Stearns, upon finding sores on the parson's back, proceeds to gauge them out with a knife.

most famous sequences in recent horror films) is the ending. The final two minutes.

Richard and Sara are held captive by Hopkins and are 'interrogated' but refuse to confess. Just as some of his army colleagues burst into the prison, Richard breaks free in an attempt to prevent the torture of Sara, bound face-down on a table. In a frenzy, Richard picks up an axe and starts to ruthlessly and systematically hack Hopkins to pieces. Aghast at the butchery, one of the soldiers (played by Nicky Henson, now OOB of *the Secret Service*) shoots the dying witchfinder. Richard, his mind gone, screams, "You took him away from me!"

In the silent room, Sara starts to scream and scream. After intercut shots of empty corridors and staircases with the screams echoing along them, the camera cuts back to Sara's dazed, screaming face. The frame freezes. The credits roll.

The sequence was edited like this due to a mistake. On the final day of shooting, a continuity problem arose related to scenes which had already been filmed. In the script, Nicky Henson was supposed to shoot both Vincent Price and Ian Ogilvy. But he only had a single flintlock pistol. This had been established in previous scenes. So he could only shoot one person. Reeves decided:

"All right, just shoot Vincent and I'll get Ian to scream and shoot and

go mad and freeze frame on Hilary Dwyer screaming."

In the original book the hero (called Ralph Mergery) hangs Hopkins at the end. He has not been 'framed' by the witchfinder—and his wife is not present. There were changes to the film as well.

In the US, *Witchfinder General* was released as *Edgar Allan Poe's The Conqueror Worm* (named after a line from one of his poems). Prologue and epilogue narrations were added to justify the title change.

The real Matthew Hopkins? He died of consumption in his bed in 1647... Although some contemporary rumours said he had been thrown into a river and sank—a sign that he was a witch.

WITCHFINDER GENERAL (1968)

Vincent Price (as Matthew Hopkins), Ian Ogilvy (Richard Marshall), Hilary Dwyer (Sara), Robert Dwyer (John Lowes), Robert Ziffel (John Stearns), Patrick Wymark (Oliver Cromwell), Wilfred Brimble (Moor Cook), Michael Boin (Captain Gordon), Nicky Henson (Trooper Swallow), John Tomes (Trooper Harcourt), William Maxwell (Trooper Gifford), Tony Selby (Salvo), Beverly Sills (Prison), John Kidd (St Magdalen), Peter Hugh (2nd Magdalen).

Directed by Michael Reeves. Produced by Arnold L. Miller. Co-produced by Lewis N. Hayward. Asst. Director Ian Goldford. Screenplay by Michael Reeves & Tom Baker. Based on a novel by Ronald Bassett. Photography Johnny Capillone. Edited by Howard Lanning. Special effects by Roger Dicken. ("When Hisselmann Ruled the Earth", "The Land That Time Forgot" etc.), Steve Paul Foots.

Types: 87 mins.

Gen X.



...and, by being slowly lowered by ropes into a

BEYOND THE

An Interview With

by Tony Crowley

*I first met George A. Romero going to **Communion**. Which sounds a more religious experience than it was. A great intro, though; and much better than the film of that name. The place was Cannes, during the festival last year; the setting for the long-awaited re-emergence of Romero, the greatest warring hero of the (truly individualistic) horror-scene . . . and indeed, the much sung hero of the **HoH** editorial board.*

*Until seeing his new film, **Martin** (**HoH** 14), a few nights previously I had never heard of the man. And felt duty-bound to tell him so. Despite his height . . . and weight. I had, in fact, only recognised him in the **Communion** crush because he'd played a small role in **Martin** as an exceedingly propitious practise which helps identify directors from critics, producers, packagers, hauliers and other assorted movie-groupies thronging Cannes at festival-time.*

*If I didn't know him, he knew **House of Hammer**. Which is perhaps why he refused to take umbrage at my honest ignorance of him (quite the reverse in fact; he is a most friendly fella) and he agreed to a meeting later in the week.*

He is, as I rapidly discovered from the multi-lingual Cannes crowds, a king to the horror-buffs; if, as yet, no great big deal to Hollywood. Still, what does the new-Hollywood know about talent these days? It's all dollar and cents on the barrel—and TV sales in the hole.

*Romero's lofty reputation, until **Martin**, rests on two of his previous four films: **The Night of the Living Dead** (1968; **HoH** 3), which I've been assured is the greatest/worst film ever made—and **The Crazies** (1972; **HoH** 6), which I'm told is a classic of the genre, although Romero himself calls*



*Left: George Romero in his walk-on role in **Martin**. Right: a scene from*

It a post-boiler.

Before that he used to make TV commercials. He works from Pittsburgh. And nobody knew where he'd been since 1972. Which is why we met and tried to chat it up in true Cannes style—taping in the sun. We were, however, forced (forced I tell you!) into a bar due to the infernal row of a chain-saw massacre of nearby trees. This was either for ecological reasons

or to remind us Tobe Hooper also had a film in town. (In Cannes you can never tell what appears to be the ordinary, not with a two week career of stunts underfoot).

The saw demolished the living wood-work as we discussed Romero's absence and much applauded re-entry, and as he explained the background, the hassles and the joys, of being a filmmaker in America.

LIVING DEAD

George A. Romero



perhaps the most famous Romero film of all, *Night of the Living Dead*.

Hoff: Where—exactly—have you been at for the last four years?

Romero: Learning all there is to know . . . First of all, the American scene in terms of making films was something I don't think any of us understand! I certainly didn't understand it when I made *Night of the Living Dead*. We had just a commercials production company and, of course, making features was my first love. My focus: So we got it up and made it, unbeknownst to anyone in the business.

We hadn't talked with a distributor. We just made it. Then took it to show people. Columbia looked at it. AIP looked at it. Walter Reade looked at it. And Reade's company, Continental, came along first with what sounded like a terrific offer. And so, obviously, I thought this business was a piece of cake (laughs).

Hoff: Finding you'd won some awards only? Ripped off?

Well, there's some controversy about that. The film returned a hellava lotta

money. Well, the investors made a lot of money. The question is, they should have made more. I think Continental did a very good job with the film. The real problem was they sold it off cheap. In a lot of situations. Particularly abroad. Even after it became a "classic", or whatever it became. They were just selling it off for screenings—or they were until Reade went belly-up (Reade was killed in a sky-diving accident). Theatres were buying it for 25 bucks flat. So it wasn't really a rip-off in that sense. Reade's didn't quite understand they had a tiger by the tail. Even towards the end, when it became obvious, when there were several offers coming from other people—"Hey, let's put your film and my film together . . . Let's make them unavailable for several years and then bring 'em out in a double-bill" . . . including the obvious one, *The Body Snatchers*. Reade's weren't interested. Their policy, I guess, with respect to them.

Hoff: Any chance of a re-issue now. I, for one, would like to see it.

Hopefully we can do something like that; I think so. I no longer control the company that produced the film. I have a profit percentage in it. I'm a shareholder and so forth. But I'm not controlling the company. There is a lawsuit against Reade's company. Fortunately the film has become a permanent title, and so we'll be getting, or the corporation will be getting it back. If only to keep it around—for its own benefit. To make sure the negatives are not picked up by some IBM typewriter company or something in a tax situation.

Hoff: You have your own copy back home, I suppose.

A couple of copies . . . So what happened next in your film business schooling?

After *Living Dead*, we rushed into two projects. Because it was a piece of cake! There's *Always Vanilla* (1972), a little romantic comedy, fell together because of money. A disaster! I wasn't very happy with it. I'm still not. It's the least successful of the films I've done. The next one, *Jack's Wife* (also known as *Hungry Wives*; 1972) dealt kinda peripherally with witchcraft. That went into distribution with Jack Harris. But again it was a slough-off. Distribution wasn't handled very well, and the film

was sold on completion to another financial group. One of those tax situations. It's actually now in the black. It's a film which I actually like very much. I was still learning, you know, how to use the pencil. So I understand that in terms of production values, quality and everything, it wasn't marketable. Didn't have any names, either. And it was a serious piece, but too heavy, too serious. And with the changing face of the business, particularly in the States, you can't do that—that kind of film doesn't exist. They won't even talk to you about it.

But you didn't give up . . . ?

By then, we thought we'd learned all there was to know and we got together with Cambist Films in New York, and co-financed, co-produced *The Crucibles*—which, from our new position of knowledge, we felt was really going to go through the roof.

"EC Comics is where it was at when I was a kid. That's where my curiosity began. That's what started me off. I thought they were terrific!"

And it didn't. At least, not in America.

I have to say again it was misunderstanding . . . Cambist thought they had *Jaws*. I mean . . . which it ain't. It was a pot-boiler. They blew a wad of money, opened it in New York, two East Side houses and on Broadway. It survived five days. Nine people showed. They never even mentioned *Night of the Living Dead* in the advertising, which would have at least started some kind of reaction. In Europe, the film opened the Edinburgh festival, took Best Film at Trieste and started to get attention. This year we're selling off some territories and it's getting into the black getting some more light—partially because of our re-entry now with Martin.

Which brings us to this four-year absence from the scene . . .

Well, we decided we didn't know all there was to know . . . So we got into learning, studying the whole corporate film-making business. We turned to two things: importing European products, and producing for TV—which in the U.S. is a safe market. I mean it's sometimes hard for an independent to sell his products to television there, but if you can make up-front deals, you're not waiting for box-office, or any of the other fickle elements that happen to movies. We produced a series of shows, all documentary stuff—seventeen biographies of American athletes. And some frothy entertainment things which we syndicated. A magic show special, for instance, with Peter Graves as host, and

magicians from around the world.

In that period, '72-'76, I shot more film than I've ever shot in my life. It was really cathartic! It also gave me exposure to video tape and I've just been playing around, having a ball. In addition, we've become active in publishing, and recently formed an association with Libra Films.

Hence the re-emergence of George Ravera.

Yeah, we found we were ready to start seriously thinking about production again. And Martin, an idea I'd been sitting on for some time, fell into place. If you look at the strategy of what I wanted to do, on a career-level, it was to re-introduce myself. Just tell people, "Hey! I exist. Here's a little film that I think is nice . . ." and have it as a kind of lead-in for the next two projects we have on the boards . . . And so that's what's been going on. That's a long answer to a short question.

Martin supplies another short, obvious question. Is he or isn't he . . . a vampire? I don't think he is.

Good! Neither do I. The poor kid has been conditioned like hell—right into hell.

Exactly! That's really what it's all about. Well, that's what I suspect. As happens with all films, I have a longer version at home! (laughs) In which we see a little more of all that. My own version is a little over two hours. Substantially longer. Mostly mood stuff, you know, watching the other people more. Through Martin's eyes. But I was pretty happy, actually, with this cut-down. At least I wasn't told "Gimme more blood—and out all that crap."

It's deliberately ambiguous therefore?

Oh yeah, and I'm comfortable about that. Because that's not what it's about

either. I don't care really about the specifics of his background. I really don't care if he is or isn't. I think of him as just a poor, mixed-up kid.

Leaving aside any Chris Lee-like day-long discussion about what accurately constitutes a horror film: why are you into horror movies?

Okay, to take it on that level . . . I have to say *EC Comics*. That's where it was at when I was a kid. That's where my curiosity began. I thought they were (laughs) terrific! That's what started me off. Then, of course, came the early films. So it's just a particular barner of mine. I don't want to stay there. Unfortunately, if I make a couple more of these—and I am—I could be stuck . . .

. . . with a label. Like Martin. Maybe that's what this film is really all about. You are Martin!

Could be . . .

[He laughs, a nervous laugh for once; he gives out a look of sudden recognition].



The Crucibles (1972; see Hell 6). "A pot-boiler, basically, an action adventure thing which people call science-fiction. It's not. I don't consider it science-fiction. It's more like a *Combat* comic—but again I was very happy with this film. Cambist Films thought they had *Jaws* . . . which it ain't! It survived five days in New York—nine people showed. They never even mentioned *Night of the Living Dead* in the advertising which would have at least started some kind of reaction . . ."

Yeah... you know, there's a great deal of truth in what you say... (Recognition grows, smily, fascinating to watch).

You're right! That's what it's like. It's such a treat! The business again... Well, it hasn't been bad, I have to look at it on a company level I haven't really come to realize it, that much. I'm still enjoying it. I'm intellectualizing... Right now, I'm more worried—very worried—about what happens to me in a couple of years. Again, on that corporate film level which says, "Oh well, that's all you can do." Which is not at all what I want to continue doing. My Italian venture with Dario Argento is really going to lock it up, though—

[Of which venture more news in future issues]

So you may need another long respite ahead before re-re-introducing yourself. Make a new genre film: say, this is me, this is the new film, and there's no blood in it...?

Absolutely right! And that's a hard bridge. Particularly in the States. It's crazy! Unless you really play the big politics game in order to do the big projects.

How fast do you shoot your movies?

Martin took five weeks, which was... well, I know a lot of people working the West Coast who relate budgets entirely to time. Like, how many weeks can you buy! A lot of directors would envy five weeks. Whereas, I'd like more. I like a lot of shots. A lot of options. So far, I've always had the advantage of physically cutting my own stuff. Largely, I'm cutting as I shoot. But also as a director, I'll just shoot a lot of options and worry about it on the table later. I love that—just love the editing process. So I love having the options. I don't like to be tied down because, very often, that's the difference between keeping a scene or being able to cut it back.

Do these options allow scope for improvisation? On Martin, for example, you'd been making notes for years, you'd written the book as well as the script—do you adhere to the letter of your word, come what may, or depart from it, roam around it on a loose rein?

It was a pretty complete script and I stuck very closely to it. Actually, too closely. Because I came out with a film that was a little too long... But I know what it's like, for example, doing those movies for television. Six days, a precise number of minutes and seconds

and only so much film. I can't imagine working that way. Well, I can imagine it—but I won't do it! I've also done some video work which has to be carefully menued and it amazes me that people work that way. I've made television commercials on bigger budgets than Martin. Sixty-second films! That's Sweepon City—where it's all tightly controlled to precise seconds. So, being forced to work that way for so long, maybe I just like the free rein in doing a feature. Other people find making a feature is a great challenge. I find it absolutely free. I'll shoot things six or seven different ways which is, I guess, the advantage of working outside the system. It's also a little bit of escape.

Ever feel influenced by other directors in your work and situation?

I'm sure I have been. But I haven't made it a point to study any one director, in particular. A lot of people

"A lot of people compare The Sentinel to Night of the Living Dead. That is the most insulting thing ever said about me or my film."

went on and on about Living Dead—and Hitchcock and Siegel. Maybe they were right. If so, it was all sub-consciously so on my part. I don't feel it. I'm not a confident director in that sense. Because I have to have the options in cutting, to play with later. And I will... I will.

Tough news on the baggy rating about your Hitchcockian traits?

I find it ludicrous that people compare me—or Living Dead—so Hitchcock! That film is so extremely, so diametrically opposed to Hitchcock's style of work. Maybe, just maybe—because I shoot [photograph] the films as well—maybe there is something unconsciously Hitchcockian with the framing, the lighting and so forth. If so, that was done on the fly...!

We first met the other night, going to see *Communion*; so you obviously keep in touch with the horror-scene. What do you feel about the current crop of exorcists, omens and the like?

I think *The Exorcist* worked. I liked it! On a craft level, it was excellent. And, coming from a Catholic background [laughs], I appreciated the book and thought, the film pretty accurately translated the book. Beyond that, I can't speak for it conceptually. I'm not emotionally involved with the Devil and that kind of evil. I'm more concerned with human people.

The Omen was a typical U.S. formula film, influenced by U.S. television. So many of those films are just TV movies, largely because a lot of directors are



coming out of television. Jaws was largely that way, too. Again, on a craft level, Jaws was terrific. Just a big adventure story, more than anything else, and tremendously TV-influenced.

And The Sentinel?

I've seen a lot of reference with that to *Night of the Living Dead*...

I would hope not...

Well, a lot of people have said that. And that is perhaps the most insulting thing ever said about me or my film! I thought *The Sentinel* was tasteless. Just... awful! I just don't understand why, but there are so many films like that being turned out today. 'Let's get it on... we'll bring in some freaks... get Ava Gardner and whoever...' That's the formula thing, again. There's a film around in the States now, when I left home it was on top of the charts—It's Ainsel Jesus, it's just going through the roof. And yet it's just... well, I think it's an interesting concept, but it's a piece of crap! Everyone jumped on that bandwagon after *Exorcist*, *Omen* and everything else. So we have a lot of those films that really shouldn't exist. There's no *involvement*... I don't think those films should be made... they might as well be on television. They're not even an expression of the genre, really. They're such a rip.

Their success doesn't say much for the public—or, whoever they are, those corporate boxes and their opinion of the public.

Yeah, that's it. Well, they sold them Nixon, you know. So they figure they

can sell 'em anything. [Laughs].

I trust you didn't make any commercials for him?

No, we didn't. However we did Romney, which is just as bad. And we did Albert Brewer against George Wallace in Alabama. And we sold a lot of soap!

I have to applaud your comments about TV—or TV movies—influencing, i.e. raising feature movies.

Well, it's become the sensibility there. I don't shoot that way. Maybe it's because of my dodgy memory factor, or whatever, but I try to avoid depending on who the backers are and who you have to satisfy. Before pre-production, I try not to even think of camera positions, visual approaches, until I see the thing happening—then I try to document it more than plot it out, more for movie. That was the problem with *Commersion*. There were some splendidly bizarre things that you wanted to be affected by—but you were aware of

structure all the time, aware of shots.

Camera-position instead of exposition.

Exactly right. I think my freedom comes from doing so much. I mean I've done, hands-on, all of it. The lighting, the camera, the cutting. And I really miss that energy when I can't work that way. With *The Crazies*, I tried to inject that energy in and around a more carefully-planned-work-situation I couldn't quite do it. It feels synthetic to me. It always does. Just synthetic... Maybe that's my biggest fear about going up in the world. Losing all the toys.

"I find it ludicrous that people compare me—or *Living Dead*—to Hitchcock. The film is so diametrically opposed to his style."

Not, for instance, a fear of working with names for once?

Oh, absolutely not. The fear there, the problem there, is that there's going to be a little panel on the next table choosing the names. In the U.S. the term is 'TV viable names. Which means, no matter what happens, you recover your budget, because you get the TV slot.

You'd try, at least, to choose your own TV viable names?

Hopefully... Corporately, if you're gonna put the Big Boss on the line, that's what they say is required. And I do have to accept that. Because it can be disastrous to keep on cranking out low-budget stuff that doesn't go anywhere at all.

Like how long should you be your own boss, and have your own subjects, play with all your own toys...

If you don't meet certain criteria, the other end of the pole is zero return. You can only convince people to back you for so long that way. That, too, is the criteria, unfortunately, in terms of being considered for larger projects. I'm not talking particularly of the studios, either; I'm talking about serious packages. So, it's a matter of coming to grips with all of that. I'd be just as happy to do one of those, a Martin a year. The question is: how long can that go on... reasonably.

*So what happens if the phone rings and Fox want you to direct *Omen Part III*. Are you ready or willing for that—even if you hadn't proposed it from stage one?*

I wouldn't want to do it if they were just buying, you know, the *Living Dead* credentials. And if it was going to be somebody else's show. That's been my concern. I also think, because of our financing and because we're looking at a couple of bigger projects right now—they're not gonna ask me to do *Omen III* until I've worked with names, and,



Night of the Living Dead (1968; see HGH 5). Made almost on terms. "We hadn't talked with a distributor. We just made it. Then we took it to show people. Columbia looked at it. AIP looked at it. Walter Reade looked at it—and came out first with what sounded a terrific offer. But they never understood what it was worth. They sold it off cheap... Even after it became a "classic" or whatever it became, theaters were buying it for 25 bucks flat. Wain's really a rip-off in that sense. The investors made a lotta money. They should have made more. Reade's didn't quite understand they had a tiger by the tail..."



completed the first five spots on the form! And really, what I'm most concerned about in my future is those next five spots. Once they're filled up, then perhaps those options will come my way. With some strength.

You must have been invited *West* before now. Surely *AIP* or *Roger Corman* chased you after *Living Dead*?

Initially, yeah. Right after *Living Dead*... or after it became... something. And I didn't go. Some say, to my detriment. Because it's been a long while since *Dead*. However, we've been working continuously and we're really happy with what we've been doing. I got some TV network credentials, which they tell me—or my agent tells me—means I'm in very good shape now. [Laughs]

Why didn't you flush out to *Corman* or wherever?

Being a lot more altruistic then, I didn't feel ready at all. Whereas now, I'm not sure what that means even. Because we're all playing around, lowering new things each time out.

Studying that corporate jungle—and doing it, your way...

Although we have an office in New York, we have studio facilities in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. My partner, Richard Rubenstein [who has a walk-on role in *Martin*, but then so does Romero—as a love-bug prize] and I have a very good relationship. We started together on the cast of *The Cruises*; I was just finishing it. We've grown up with this television thing and been able to put it together pretty substantially. Operating in other areas as well. We have a lot of teens in the fire so we don't have to be sweating for the next deal—purely for survival. Through our publishing division I'd like very much to get a couple of things written—a text for independent film-makers who get misled, the way we got misled. Particularly, again, in the States. I would say it's the easiest business in the world. Yet none of us can crack it. We all have the answer but none of us wants to sit down and work it out—revelated by the corporate thing. And because it's a mystery. And we get it all out of proportion. We all do that.

"I just shoot a lot of options and worry about it on the cutting-table later. I'll shoot things six or seven different ways. The advantage of working outside the system."

Why Pittsburgh of all places?

I'm from New York and came to Pittsburgh to go to school... There's



Martin (1977; see *Holt* 14) "An idea I'd been sitting on for sometime and wanted to do—a just feel into place. To re-introduce myself. A little film that I think is nice and a kinda lead-in for the next two projects on the boards..."



a lot of good people working avocationally there. Good production units; couple of really good stage directors; a lot of radio and TV. I found my *Martin*, John Ambras, in a play there—and the old man Cuda, Lincoln Muzzell in his white suit... The first sicklecodeon was in Pittsburgh. The first radio station. Things like that. Yet it has never grown up. Which is why, in a kinda perverse way, why I'm determined to stay there. It's a rather wealthy town, so financing has always been... okay for us. Up there, we're the only game in town.

Okay, but where will you be—or want to be—come 1980? Still lord of your Pittsburgh mansion or lorded it with the big guys on the West Coast? I mean, who was in the end, the independent lone ranger... or Hollywood's big bucks?

Well... they do, probably... I don't know. It depends on what happens to the industry out there. We have to see

what effect the new tax hit is gonna have. There might be a big, big spot for independents for lower-budget features now. I think the face of the industry is going to have to change. Also, after waiting ten years for this video explosion—which is going to suck up all the product—maybe we'll be starting to feel the effect of that soon. We have Home Box and other companies already buying films for the video-cassettes...

It's also a question of which way the power is going. I guess, we may wind up with the same guys in charge. [laughs]. It's not a matter of West Coast or East Coast—that's like two leading factions of the same family. We're in New York now and Pittsburgh, and I don't think it particularly matters where you produce. [He pauses, then grins broadly]. I don't know, man, I don't know where I want to be in two years. I just want to be shooting something.

CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF Part II 'MURDER MOON'

SOME INSTINCT LEADS LEON BACK... BACK TO THE ONLY SAFE HAVEN HE HAS KNOWN IN HIS LIFE...

LEON!
HOW DID YOU
GET BACK...?
AND WHERE
ARE YOUR
CLOTHES?

IRON BARS CAN SOME-
TIMES TELL A STORY
MUCH PLAINER THAN
WORDS...

GOOD LORD!

THE PRIEST IS CALLED, FOR ONLY
HE CAN EXPLAIN...
AND BE BELIEVED...

YOU SAY I TURNED
INTO A WOLF? I-I DON'T
REMEMBER ANYTHING...
YET THERE'S BLOOD
ON MY HANDS...

PERHAPS
ONLY THE
BLOOD OF A
SHEEP, HIS
SON, AND YET,
SOMETHING
MUST BE
DONE...

I THINK I CAN
GET YOU INTO A
MONASTERY, WHERE
YOU'LL BE CARED FOR...
BUT TILL THEN, YOU
MUST BE CHAINED...!

CHAINED LIKE AN
ANIMAL? NO...
I WON'T...

LEON!
COME
BACK!

IT IS DAWN
WHEN LEON
REACHES THE
VINYARD
AGAIN, AND
PREPARES
TO START
WORK...

BUT
TODAY,
HE WOULD
WORK
ALONE...?

BUT BY NIGHTFALL,
HE BEGINS TO
REALISE HIS
FATE...

BUT SUDDENLY...

LEON!
WHAT'S THE
MATTER?

CHRISTINA
KEEP AWAY
FROM ME!

PANICKING, LEON TRIES TO FLEE... BUT EVEN HIS FEET SEEM TO HAVE TURNED AGAINST HIM...

LEON... IN GOD'S NAME!

OOOF!

LEON HAS NO IDEA HOW MUCH TIME PASSES AS HE LIES THERE IN DELIRIUM UNTIL... FINALLY...

ALL NIGHT? BUT... TELL ME... DID ANYTHING HAPPEN?

OH, LEON, YOU'RE AWAKE... BUT NOW I MUST GO... BEFORE MY FATHER FINDS OUT I'VE BEEN HERE WITH YOU ALL NIGHT...

NO, NOTHING HAPPENED... YOU JUST SEEMED TO BE TALKING!

A MOMENT'S HESITATION, AND THEN...

YES, I'LL COME WITH YOU... BUT WHAT'S THE MATTER, LEON?

I'LL EXPLAIN LATER... BUT WE MUST LEAVE RIGHT NOW! GO AND GET READY!

THEN YOU'VE SAVED ME! BUT WE MUST GET MARRIED AND GO AWAY... IF YOU LOVE ME, SAY YOU'LL COME WITH ME!

BUT TIME IS TOO SHORT, AND THEIR PLANS ARE INTERRUPTED BY THE ARRIVAL OF THE POLICE...

LEON CARDO! SE THOSE YOUR CLOTHES?

WELL, YES... I THINK SO...

THEN I'M ARRESTING YOU... THE CHARGE IS MURDER...!

AND SO...

JAILER! LISTEN TO ME! YOU MUST SEND FOR MY FATHER...

HE WON'T LISTEN... WON'T DO ANYTHING... UNLESS YOU PAY HIM!

HERE! IT'S ALL THE MONEY I HAVE! FETCH MY FATHER... PLEASE! HURRY...

MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE WINERY, BO...

LEON, WHERE ARE YOU? GET READY... OH! FATHER!

SO, YOU WERE GOING TO RUIN AWAY WITH HIM... WELL, YOU CAN FORGET THAT...

I AM GOING TO MARRY HIM! WHERE IS HE, FATHER? HE NEEDS ME!

WELL, HE'S NOT GOING TO SEE YOU... THEY'VE PUT HIM WHERE HE BELONGS... IN JAIL!



BUT MORNING IS GOING TO END CHRISTINA NOW...

YOU THERE! DRIVE ME INTO TOWN... IT'S MY FATHER'S ORDER!

IT IS A LONG DRIVE BACK INTO TOWN, AND IN THE MEANTIME...

BUT LEON, THEY STILL HAVE TO PROVE THAT YOU KILLED THOSE PEOPLE...

THEY'LL PROVE IT... BECAUSE IT'S TRUE! AND IT'LL HAPPEN AGAIN TONIGHT IF THEY KEEP ME HERE... THESE BARS WON'T STOP...

WE'LL GO TO THE MAYOR... AND FIND OUT WHAT CAN BE DONE



TELL HIM I'VE CONFESSED... AND I MUST BE EXECUTED BEFORE SUNDOWN AND YOU KNOW HOW THAT MUST BE DONE...

SHOT WITH A SILVER BULLET, OR BURNED ALIVE!



AND SO, AT THE TOWN HALL...

THIS IS PREPOSTEROUS! I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!

IT'S TRUE... MY SON HAS CONFESSED... AND IF NOTHING IS DONE, HE'LL BREAK OUT OF THAT PRISON AT NIGHTFALL...

... AND KILL ANYONE HE COMES ACROSS... AND YOU'LL BE RESPONSIBLE!

AH... WELL... LET'S GO AND LOOK AT HIM...



YOU MUST BELIEVE THEM, SENOR! ALL THEY'VE TOLD YOU IS TRUE...

AND, AT THAT MOMENT...

LEON! WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO YOU?

CHRISTINA!

I'M CHRISTINA FERNANDEZ, SENOR... LEON AND I ARE ENGAGED TO BE MARRIED...

YOU LOOK PERFECTLY NORMAL TO I'LL NEED OTHER WITNESSES... INDEPENDENT WITNESSES!

WHA... AND WHO ARE YOU, SENORITA? YOU KNOW HIM?

SO, YOU YOU KNOW HIM WELL... DO YOU KNOW ABOUT HIS... AFFLICTION?

BUT, OUT OF THE MOUTH OF THE INNOCENT...

HE DOESN'T HAVE AN AFFLICTION... HE'S PERFECTLY NORMAL!



THANK YOU! THE PRISONER WILL STAY HERE AND AWAIT TRIAL!

COME, MY CHILD!

NO! LEAVE HER WITH ME! SHE'S THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN SAVE ME!



FATHER! OLD PIPE HAS A SILVER BULLET... YOU MUST GET IT FROM HIM... AND USE IT ON ME...



AND, AT ALFREDO'S HOUSE...

THIS IS A FRIEND OF LEON'S, WITH NOWHERE TO GO... PERHAPS SHE CAN STAY HERE... AT LEAST UNTIL DON ALFREDO FINDS PEPE...



PEPE? THEN IT'S COME TO THAT AT LAST...

I DON'T UNDERSTAND... WHAT'S THIS ABOUT A SILVER BULLET?

A SILVER BULLET MADE FROM A CRUCIFIX... THE ONLY BULLET THAT COULD KILL... A WEREWOLF!



BUT NOT EVERYONE BELIEVES SUCH THINGS... LIKE THE OLD DRUNK RD WHO SHARES LEON'S CELL....

A BEAUTIFUL EVENING... AND THERE'S A FULL MOON RISING? IT'LL SOON BE BRIGHT AS... WHAT?



NO! IT'S HAPPENING AGAIN! IT MUSTN'T... NOOOO!



GRRRRAAR!



BUT APPEALS FOR HEAVENLY AID BRING NO RELIEF...
FOR LEDN IS ALL WOLF NOW, AND EVERYONE ELSE...
ONLY VICTIMS!



AND THEN,
THE WEREWOLF
IS FREE!



BUT SUCH
HORRORS
DO NOT GO
UNNOTICED
FOR LONG...

WHAT'S
GOING ON
IN HERE...
GOOD
LORD!



FREE...
TO
KILL!



AND SO, WMN ALFREDO RETURNS FROM HIS QUEST...

WHAT'S HAPPENED?
HAS LEON GONE?
WHERE IS HE?

WE DON'T
KNOW, SENOR!
HE...

THEN...

THERE
HE IS!

UP ON THE
ROOF!



IN A MOB, MEN WILL
DOE MANY THINGS...
EVEN FACING A
WEREWOLF...

AFTER
HIM!
DON'T LET
HIM GET
AWAY!



WOLVES
CAN'T STAND
FIRE! WE'LL
FORCE HIM
DOWN...

AND, FOR A MOMENT, IT LOOKS AS
IF THE PLAN MIGHT WORK...



GRAAR!



BUT ONLY FOR
A MOMENT...

LOOK
OUT!



THE MOB SCATTERS BRIEFLY,
BUT THEN THE CHASE IS ON
AGAIN...



THERE HE
GOES! HE'S GOT
ONTO THE
CHURCH!



PERHAPS SOME SPARK OF HUMANITY REMAINS IN LEON, FOR HE DOES NOT ATTACK THE MAN WHO HAS BEEN HIS FATHER ... BUT LEAPS AWAY INSTEAD



AND THEN...



THEN THE TORMENT IS OVER...



AND FOR ALFREDO,
ONE LIST
LET AS A FATHER...



THE EXCITEMENT
OVER, THE VILLAGERS GO
HOME... LEAVING BEHIND
ONLY THREE PEOPLE...
THREE PEOPLE WHO
HAVE LOVED AND
CHERISHED YOUNG
LEON SARIIDO...
BUT FIND THAT A CRUEL
WORLD HAS ONLY
REWARDED THEM
WITH PAIN AND
GRIEF...



CURSE OF THE

WERE WOLF

By John Brosnan

BY 1960 Hammer Films had re-made most of the old horror classics: *Frankenstein*, *Dracula*, *The Mummy*, *Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* etc. so it was natural to expect that it would soon be the turn of *The Wolfman*. Hammer's version, called *The Curse of the Werewolf*, was based on Guy Endore's novel *The Werewolf of Paris*, unlike Culverwell's 1941 production which had starred Lon Chaney Jr.

The script was written by John Elder, this being a pseudonym of Anthony Hinds—the man who produced many of Hammer's most successful films until his retirement several years ago. Hinds had started with the company as bookend clerk when it was still known as Excelsior Films but very quickly worked his way up to the position of producer and with the formation of Hammer Films he joined with Michael Carreras in creating one of the most stream-lined successful film companies in the world.



The classic, though confusing, shot of an adult Len (Oliver Reed) holding his mother (Yvonne Romain) in his arms... even though in the film she dies giving birth to him!

Case of the Werewolf was directed by Terence Fisher. Fisher had directed most of Hammer's other Gothic successes, including The Curse of Frankenstein and Dracula but he has a special fondness for Werewolf. "I like it because of the tremendous inter-relation between the characters, between Reed and the girl," he said. "After all, anyone can turn into a werewolf, can't they? But it was his situation that made it scathing. The horror of him knowing that it was going to happen to him but that he couldn't do anything about it... and the conflict between this knowledge he possessed and his love for the girl. An audience, I believe, will respond to this because they can understand the emotional pull between people much more than the fact of someone turning into a werewolf. Of course Oliver Reed was very good as the werewolf. In my opinion he's never done anything better."

I doubt if Reed, who has since starred in such films as *Tomb Raider* and *The Devils*, would agree with that last remark but others might (with Reed being one of those actors who falls into the "love him or hate him" category). He was only 22 at the time of *Werewolf* and it marked his first starring role though previously he had a number of small parts in such films as *The Two Faces of Dr Jekyll and Seward of Sherwood Forest*.

Before that Oliver Reed had worked as a hanger in a Mayfair night club and had also been, very briefly, a professional boxer. He then worked for six months on a hospital porter before being called up for National Service. "I wanted to be a parasitologist," said Reed, "but they stuck me in the Medical Corps because I had worked in a hospital." Once his army days were over he decided to become an actor though he had had no previous experience. At first he got nowhere but then came a lucky break—he was chosen for a major role in a BBC TV serial. To his credit he never took advantage of the fact that he was the nephew of Sir Carol Reed, the famous British director, but obviously he never doubted his ability to succeed by himself. "I want to go to Hollywood and be a teenage kid," he told an interviewer during the making of *Werewolf*. "I want to make films for



Once more, *Werewolf* Reed and mother Roma, in a confusing publicity shot

strangers. I want screaming fans to tear the clothes off me." And Terence Fisher said of him at the time: "Not since Valentino have I known such a personality problem such an instantaneous and devastating effect. I am certain that within the next two years Oliver Reed will be one of the biggest names in the business." Well, it took a little longer than that but he made it eventually.

Also in the film was Richard Wordsworth who had performed so reasonably as the monster in *The Quatermass Experiment*. In *Werewolf* he played the mad beggar who attacked the servant girl and thus fathered the werewolf. In the original script it was obvious that the beggar was also a werewolf but the censor insisted that all such references be removed, telling Hammer that they must not combine sex with the supernatural. "Just before shooting began," said Wordsworth, "I had come to get fitted with fangs but nobody at the studio seemed to know anything about them. Finally I found someone who did and he told me: 'No fangs. The censor says no fangs. You can't have fangs and have relations with the girl as well.'"

Well, the character played by Oliver Reed had to be "bers" so they obviously chose relations with the girl. We were just about to start the scene when I attack the girl when Terence Fisher turned to the property man and said: "Have you got the white of egg?" I asked him: "Er, what's this white of egg for?" "Oh, this is something we always do," he said. "You have a mouthful of egg white and when you see the girl just dribble a little of it. But keep it careful."

In change of the make-up on the film was Roy Ashton (see the interview with Ashton in *House of Hammer* issue 2) and he succeeded in creating the best wolf man so far seen on

the screen, but the make-up caused Reed a few problems. "No one would sit next to me in the studio canteen," he complained. "Even the waitresses used to eye me strangely and keep at a distance. I'm not surprised. I was amazed myself when I saw the rash spots with blood trickling from my mouth and down my clothes and my nostrils plugged up to make these enlarged, and my face made up in a terrifying fashion. I looked a gory mess."

So as not to disturb the delicate make-up, Reed was unable to eat any food during several days of shooting so he was obliged to drink five bottles of milk a day through a straw. That must have been the hardest task of all for Mr Reed.

The Curse of the Werewolf (1960)

A Hammer Film Production

Oliver Reed (Lover); Clifford Evans (Don Alfredo Carillo); Ilva Galio (Teresa); Catherine Feller (Gloria); Yvonne Romaine (Servant Girl); Anthony Dawson (Maquis); Richard Wordsworth (Beggar); Warren Mitchell (Pope Valentin); George Woodbridge (Dominique); John Gaskiel (Priest); Ewen John (Don Enrique); Michael Ripper (DM Siskin); Sheila Brennan (Vera).

Director: Terence Fisher; Producers: Anthony Elton; Associate Producers: Anthony Nelson-Keys; Production Designer: Rossard Robinson; Art Director: Thomas Gerwell; Director of Photography: Arthur Grant; Music: Benjamin Frankel; Make-up: Roy Ashton; Special Effects: Lee Bowie; Executive Producer: Michael Carreras; Scripts: John Elder (from the novel *The Werewolf of Paris* by Guy Endore).

Certificate X

83 mins.



Young, handsome and broody. Oliver Reed in 1960

PSYCHO



Classic Corner time. With a difference. Seventeen years after the blood-curdling fact, *Hoff* has the rarely-seen storyboard of the screen's most grisly horror murder . . . *Psycho!* Plus, at last, the answer to the shower-stall's major question. Who actually directed the shower-stabbing? Alfred Hitchcock . . . or Saul Bass? The exclusive answer comes from a chapter in our critic Tony Crawley's third film book, *Scrubbers. An Illustrated History of the Bath Scene in Movies*, currently being finalised for publication.

This is the most imitated killing in movies. Whether in straight drama, cop-pat, Westerns or horror films. This is the definitive scene (celebré) of all the screen's slayings in the bathroom—where the stoney, often bright white porcelain surrounds make a perfect (and so slippery) background for red blood, splurging, dripping, congealing . . .

That, of course, is Janet Leigh (and her double) in Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho*, 1960.

"Normally," says Hitch, "any studio would have made her the love interest. I wanted to shock the audience—bumping her off early." Cue for his also much-copied gimmick that "no one, but so one" be allowed to enter the cinema after the film had begun unrolling.

But a major controversy still reigns around this classic murder sequence. And one far more important than was it ketchup or chocolate sauce doubling for the blood swirling down the bath-tub's drain. Quite simply, this query is: who really masterminded and directed the stabbing of Janet Leigh?

In his master book on *The Master* (Hitchcock; Secker and Warburg) French director François Truffaut, an acknowledged Hitch-buff, likened the killing to a rape and Hitchcock told him how the sequence was shot.

Or, how he remembered it. Or, at least, how he wanted it to be remembered . . .



THE HITCHCOCK VERSION.

"It took an arena days . . . there were 70 camera set-ups for 45 seconds of footage. We had a towel specially made up . . . with the blood that was supposed to spurt away from the knife, but I didn't use it. I used a live girl instead, a naked model who stood in for Janet Leigh. We only showed Miss Leigh's hands, shoulders and head. All the rest was the stand-in.

"Naturally, the knife never touched the body; it was all done in the montage. I shot some of it in slow motion so as to cover the breasts. The slow shots were not accelerated later on . . . they were inserted in the montage so as to give an impression of normal speed."

That's all well and good and quite technical. At the time most people, like a

kid actor in one of Hitchcock's films, only wanted to know . . . 'tween, was it chocolate sauce?"

The more vital truth of the matter—one of the best kept secrets in movie history—is that Hitchcock did not direct the sequence at all. Saul Bass did and he has never officially been credited for anything else other than choreographing the scene . . . until now.

In order to plan the shock murder, step by bloody step, Hitchcock called upon the services of the veteran graphic designer, Saul Bass—until *Psycho*, better known for his remarkable new genre of credit-titles; mainly for Otto Preminger movies: *Carnegie Jones*, *Advise and Consent*, *Exodus*, etc. Indeed, all the winning man-tile formats of the last twenty years or so (particularly the 007 titles) were greatly influenced by Saul's initial and quite revolutionary switch from the conventional roll of names, or worse still, those clanging, fluttering pages of a book, featuring all the film's stars and technicians.

Two years after *Psycho*, Bass directed one set of titles which proved a hundred per cent better than the film they were fronting: the memorable black cut on the proof for *Walk on the Wild Side*.

And so, Saul Bass is who who story-boarded the *Psycho* stabbing.

And he also directed the sequence on a closed set with Hitchcock in close and constant attendance. It was his directing debut.

"He was very nice about it," says Bass. "I thought it was a generous thing for him to do on his picture. I learned a lot from it and very nice things emerged from it."

No credit, though. Or none beyond that for "title-designer."

THE BASS VERSION

There were two cuts that Hitch added when I was through. We were on the stage three or four days, then I sat down with George Tzenocis, the editor, and together we edited the footage. When we were through, Hitch added two cuts. A shot of the knife going into her belly—done in reverse. And some blood splattering. He felt it was too bloodless.

"I thought it would be interesting to do a bloodless murder, with only blood at the end, going down the drain. With all the water from the shower, the blood might—or might not—have been washed away immediately. Could have worked either way. Hitch felt he needed the blood, so he added the cuts."

And yes, the blood was chocolate sauce. And the worst problem Bass had to contend with

"Originally, I planned the pathway from the dead eye (see storyboard) with a little trickle of blood coming out from under the face and moving towards the camera—with the camera panning away in sort of retreat. So we built a special tiled floor series backed it to create an imperceptible depression through

which we could direct the course of the blood and stuff. It didn't work!

"We worked at it like for ever and finally gave it up and did just the straight pathway from where she drops over the floor."

So now you know!

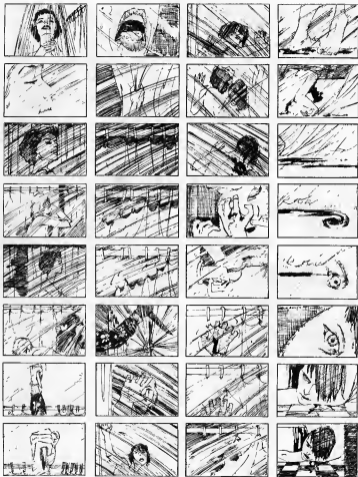


Uncredited. Saul Bass, the quiet man behind the *Psycho* stabbing, remains cool and far from annoyed about never being credited for his direction of the sequence. Instead, he's grateful still to Hitchcock for the opportunity, which indeed led to more direct jobs: credit-title shots for the *New York World's Fair*, much of the *Spartacus* battle; the split-screening in *Grand Prix*; and *All for Justice*, *Phase IV*, a *Shooting of Bob or Ann*, made in Britain, 1972.

But it's his credit-title revolution that Saul is always to be remembered—and thanked—for. Beginning work for Otto Preminger, he designed logos/titles for *Blue*—the stunning rise of *Carnegie Jones*, 1954, to the *Exodus* rights of *Sack Good Friends*, 1971. These movie trademarks soon spilled and animated in his title-designs, also include the segmented corpse of *Assassins of a Murder*; the *Topcat* Capitol Hill of *Advise and Consent*; the cop-ster arm with chasing fingers of *The Man With The Golden Arm*. The arm, always outstretched, because he got theme: brandishing a sword, *Spartacus*; rifle, *Exodus*; three balloons, *One, Two, Three*; in a US novel shere for *In Harm's Way*; and protruding from a globe, firmly latched on to a bagful of dollars for *It's A Mad, Mad, Mad World*. His greatest, longest and most expensive animated title (120,000 for six minutes) came with the epilogue for *Around The World in 80 Days*.

Later on, he began shooting special footage for his titles. A mass of frenetic streets for *Something Wild*; a stagecoach rolling through *The Big Country*; Hitler dancing for *The Victors*; and years ahead of his time—and equipment—the famous helicopter opening, swaying right down to the fleeing finger in *West Side Story* . . . where he had the actual credits chalked up on a wall.

His code: "I'm making the audience expectant . . . I try to reach for a simple visual phrase that tells you what the picture is about. It's not as going mad with the full, jaw-work treatment just because you like the idea yourself. No matter how good, how brilliant an idea may be, if it doesn't blend with the film there's only one thing to do—obscure it away. OK, if you wish, for future use, but lose it now. Get rid of it. And stay quiet."





By popular request, we are, in this issue, starting our long overdue look at the history and growth of Britain's longest-lived—and best known—*independent* film production company. A company with the unique distinction of being the first film company to win a Queen's Award To Industry for its export achievements. The story of Hammer Films has featured prominently in several film books and magazines, in fact, were it not for a similar project from Alan Eyles, the series you are about to start reading

would have been published in book form. While in Britain, and London specifically, in 1971, New Yorker Bob Sheridan, a 27-year-old freelance writer, set about compiling material for a book devoted solely to Hammer Films. All the groundwork was completed and he started looking up the Hammer stars (both in front of and behind the camera), but as he interviewed each in turn, he became aware of the fact that a Mr. Eyles and his associates had been there mere weeks before.

Nobly, he abandoned his project, realizing two so similar books could not possibly be published.

However, with a new (and far wiser) market now clamouring for material on the history of Hammer through *Holt* magazine, and because of the space, format and distribution limitations of Mr. Eyles's book, we have persuaded Bob Sheridan to adapt his manuscript to episodic form, continue his research up to the present day, and are now able to give you the full . . .

HISTORY OF HAMMER

Part One. Pre-Horror Hammer 1935-1956.

by Bob Sheridan

(with additional personal comments by Michael Carreras, head of Hammer Film Productions, bracketed and in italics).

With the release of *The Curse of Frankenstein* (adapted to *Holt* 2 & 3) in 1957, Hammer Films changed the style of the horror film and shaped their own destiny. For that film introduced to the horror film world not only two of its greatest actors, Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee, but also a type of horror film never seen before—a full (blooded) colour Gothic horror tale which never flinched at its own horrors, but blatantly displayed them before shocked audiences.

Despite hostile critical reaction, the film was an instant worldwide success (with enthralled audiences from London to Tokyo) and Hammer Films were quickly on their way to even greater successes, so much so that soon the phrase "Hammer horror" would describe a whole style of film making.

Although *The Curse of Frankenstein* was the start of an era, it was not the beginning of Hammer Films. For that, we must go back more than another twenty years, for it was in late 1934 that Hammer Productions came into being.

(The actual name "Hammer" came from founder William Hinds, a successful businessman in the jewellery retailing industry. As a hobby and second business interest, Hinds ran a theatrical agency concerned mainly with amateur seaside shows and would appear occasionally himself on stage as a stand-up comedian under the name Will Hammer. His stage name of Hammer being derived from a double act—Hinds and unknown Fred—who took their pseudonyms from the London area in which they first publicly appeared—HAMMERSMITH—thus they became known as "Hammer" and "Smith". I cannot vouch for the authenticity of this story though it was told to me by Will Hammer personally—but perhaps it was just one of his jokes . . . Michael Carreras)

Extending his interest from the live theatre into films the first Hammer Production was *The Public Life of Henry the Ninth* in 1935. While the film itself had little to do with Hammer as we know them,



The founders of Hammer Film Productions, Will Hammer (Will Hammer) Hinds (top), and Enrique Carreras.

the title demonstrates that even in their earliest days, Hammer Films were designed to offer the public something pre-sold which they were certain to have some interest in. In this case, the title was a joke based on Alexander Korda's classic film of 1933, *The Private Life of Henry the Eighth* starring Charles Laughton. Next came *The Mystery of the Marie Celeste* (1934), of interest simply because it featured the great horror film star Bela Lugosi (who, unfortunately, never had the chance to work for Hammer during his horror period, as he died in 1956). However, this is pure coincidence as it was not a horror film but a mystery based on a famous true life incident, its American title being *The Phantom Ship*.

This was followed, in the same year, by *The Song of Freedom* starring the well-known singing personalities Paul Robeson and Elizabeth Welch (*Together with the only known film acting appearance of Will Hammer here!*)

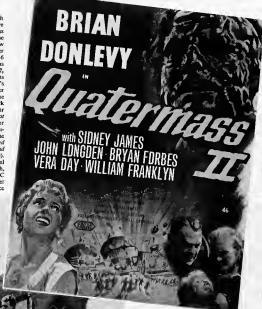
In 1937 the very popular comedian Stanley Lupino starred in *Sporting Life* and with this the earliest stage of Hammer Productions came to an end.

It was about this time that William Hinds/Hammer joined forces with Enrique Carreras, an ex-cinema owner (Carreras had previously powered one of the earliest "circuits" of cinema known as the "Blue Hills") and had staged the first Royal Coventry Performance at the Albert Hall with a presentation of *Quo Vadis*.)

At the time, Enrique Carreras was running a small distribution company, Exclusive Films (founded in 1937), distributing other companies' productions, (including many re-issues of Korda's famous London Films—Q - Phases, The Spy in Black . . . etc) as well as re-issues of the four early Hammer films (which had originally been released through different distributors)

Then, in the late 1940s, (Jack Goodfellow, Booking Manager of) the ABC circuit of cinema (now EMI) showed such interest

in the box office potential of British (Quota) supporting features that Exclusive decided to go 100% production as well as contracting in distribution. Employing the skills of outside producers their first new release was a "Knightbridge-Hammer Production" entitled *River Patrol*, a 46 minute London Police story which was quickly followed by *Who Killed Van Loon?*, a 48 minute mystery thriller credited as "An Exclusive Production". Exclusive's third "home made" release, "A Hammer Film in association with Mairylebone studios" (—a converted church), was *Dick Barton, Special Agent*, which ran an hour and ten minutes (a somewhat lengthy at that time) and marked an important "first" for Hammer in that it was based on a financially successful BBC radio series of the same name. (So successful that people used to stop their cars on their way home and listen to the eighty 15 minute episodes). Once again, Hammer was turning to material which the public was already familiar with, and, ironically, it was to be the BBC which would eventually inspire Hammer to specialise in the making of science



Top right: The original release poster for Hammer's 1956 film, *Quatermass II*. Above: A rare scene from Hammer's 1955 production of *The Black Widow*. Mark Stevens (played by Robert Ayres, center) attends the fake funeral of his wife, and is later framed for her murder.

fiction and horror films, but that's a long way off yet.

(It was not until February of 1949 that Hammer Film Productions Limited were officially registered, with William Hinds, Enrique Carreras, Anthony Hinds (son of Wilton), and Jesus Carreras (son of Enrique) as directors, but the official company list of Hammer Films started with the production and formed in November 1947. Operating in a house named *Deaf Close* at Cookham Lane, Berkshire.)

The first Hammer Film was *Dr. Mystère* —The Case of the Missing Heiress, based on the radio play by Wilford Bray and starring Valentina (Mae In Black) Dyoil in the title role (Dyoil was definitely a forerunner of the Christopher Lee style and appeared in many of the early films.) This firmly established the Hammer format of producing thrillers based on familiar BBC serial of play material and during 1948-49 was followed in quick succession by *The Adventures of P.C. 49*, *Collis*, *Meet Simon Cherry*, *The Man in Black*, *Room to Let*,



*Above: A little scene that from Hammer's second film, **The Mystery of the Marie Celeste** (1956) which features horror screenwriter, **Belle Lazerus** (right) as the starring role. Right: Although not a Hammer production, **Last Continent** was selected for export through Hammer's Excalibur Film Distributors. The film was later re-made in 1961 by Hammer with Michael Carreras directing.*

and bouzouki at the floor. All of these films were based on 'pre-sold' radio material and found to be generally acceptable as supporting features by British audiences.

*(Several other patterns were to emerge from this first year of continuous production. We had the use of large country houses temporarily converted to makeshift studios—a permanent technical unit that operated as a team . . . almost a family, so that the public became familiar with a Hammer style. All these films were produced by Anthony Hinds and directed by either Godfrey Grayson or Francis Searle, and a future director John Gilling was writing screenplays—such as **The Man in Black and Room to Let**.)*

1950 saw the production of five more radio favourites **When the Butler Saw**, **The Lady Craved Excitement**, **The Black Widow**, **The Ransitter Case** and **To Have and to Hold**. All were produced by Anthony Hinds and again directed by either Grayson or Searle, with one more screenplay by Gilling (**Lady Craved Excitement**). (To make **The Black Widow** and later films, we again moved to Gilling Park in Essex.

*Here we made a further Barton adventure, **Dick Barton of Bay**, with a much larger budget and a close climax on the Blackpool*

IT'S EXCLUSIVE!

ZOOM
of electric-powered speed
to a NEW land of
thrastic adventures!

**THE EXPLOITATION
PICTURE OF
THE YEAR!**

*Will TOP
Production
X.M!*

Lost Continent
180,000,000 Years Beyond Belief!

Starring
CESAR ROMERO
with
Hillary BRIDGE—Dick CHAMBLER—John ROY—SIMPSON

Tower: Sully Don Stanmer, who had played Barton in all three films, was killed in a car accident shortly after completion of the film.) 1950 also saw Michael Carreras' first production, *The Dark Light*. (I had been working as an assistant to Hitchcock since the formation of the production unit in '47). This film was produced entirely on location on the Thames near the village of Bray in Berkshire—and began to cruise permanent studio facilities which would later serve as the home of Baron Frankenstein's Estate, Dracula's Castle, The House of the Werewolf, The Mummy, The Reptile, The Zombies, Baskerville Hall and many other weird Hammer film dwellings.)

With 15 productions completed in the first three years of operation and considerable audience acceptance achieved, Hammer re-wrote its normal production formula of moving from house to house and they purchased "Down Place"—on the Thames near the village of Bray in Berkshire—and began to cruise permanent studio facilities which would later serve as the home of Baron Frankenstein's Estate, Dracula's Castle, The House of the Werewolf, The Mummy, The Reptile, The Zombies, Baskerville Hall and many other weird Hammer film dwellings.

But in this year of 1951 Hammer made their first international deal with American Producer-Distributor and cinema chain owner, Robert L. Lippert, (a major force in the growth of Hammer Productions) whereby Exclusive would distribute Lippert's product in the United Kingdom (Racket Ship X-M, The Steel Helmet, Lost Continent, Catwomen of the Moon and many others) and Lippert would provide American actors to appear in Hammer films then distribute them in the U.S.A. (Unfortunately *Ernstie Carver* was not to see this step forward in the fortunes of Hammer as he had died in October 1950 at the age of 70.)

The first five films produced in '51 were *Cloudsart*—a psychological drama starring Robert Preston, *Whispering Smith Hits London*—the well-known American investigator Whispering Smith played by Richard Carlson, *The Last Page*—George Brent (joined by *Barton's* young sex goddess, Dana Dorn), *Wings of Danger*—Zachary Scott (joined by *Diana Clement* in her first film role), and *Stolen Face*—Paul Henreid and Elizabeth Scott. (The last three of these films were all directed by a newcomer to the Hammer Team—Terence Fisher, later to become the internationally acclaimed 'evil' director of many Hammer horrors. The actor, James Neely, was also on the loose during this year with *he* and Fisher first coming together on *Wings of Danger*. Gilroy continued to accept with *Whispering Smith* and *Wings*.)

Stolen Face is of particular interest as it offered a "preview" of later Fisher/ Hammer films in terms of both plot and theme. Its central character, plastic surgeon Dr. Philip Ritter (Paul Henreid), is in love with a girl named Alice (Elizabeth Scott). After Alice takes him, Ritter

encounters a freshly deformed criminal, Lily (Muri Mackenzie). Believing that her criminal tendencies are due to her repulsive appearance, Ritter operates on Lily, transforming her into an exact look-alike of Alice (at this point, Miss Scott takes over the role of Lily). However, the operation does nothing to change Lily's evil nature, and her criminal career ends only with her death. And so we find in *Stolen Face* an early version of Hammer's obsessed "read scientific", as well as one of the first examples of Fisher's continuing theme of evil lurking beneath an attractive surface,

producer of *Hammer*—joined the company as Production Manager at this time.

1952 saw the continuation of the Hammer/Lippert association on *Lady in a Fog*—with Cesar Romero, and for the first time an American director was used, Sam Newfield. (NOTE: While the production-studio facilities were being developed at the Hammer-Bray Studios, *Wings of Danger*, *Stolen Face* and *Lady in a Fog* were made at Riverside Studios—Hammer's then studio no longer exist.) Also from Hammer/Lippert is '52 *The Gambler* and the *Lady with Dunc*



This unusual photograph proves that film crews need never get their feet wet whilst shooting "in the middle of a lake". From *Ye Hain and to Hold* (1951) with Robert Ayres and Ailsa Scott (pictured above in the boat).

Also produced during the year of '51—bringing the total of films produced that year to eight—were a P.C. 49 sequel, *A Case for P.C. 49*, *Death of an Angel*, and *Never Look Back*, which were the last of the domestic film programme. (*Overhangs* from the *radio-play* library of scripts built up during 1950. The actors—more talk than action, of *Never Look Back* all took place in an old *Batley* Courthouse in London, but the film was produced entirely in yet another converted church at Manchester, but that's the film business.)

Anthony Nelson Keys—a future profile

Clark, *Mistral* with Paul Henreid returning for a second film, *Four Sided Triangle* and *The Fireman's Boy*—both starring Barbara Payton, ("let-appeal" to become an international sex symbol star—but tragically died at an early age) and *Spaceways* with Howard Duff.

Four Sided Triangle and *Spaceways* were of special note, being Hammer's first venture into the world of science fiction and both directed by Terence Fisher.

The first, *Four Sided Triangle*, scripted by Fisher and Paul Tobson from a novel by



In *Quatermass II* (US: *Enemy from Space*), written and directed by Val Guest in 1956 from Nigel Kneale's BBC Radio series, Professor Quatermass leads a battle against an alien life form which takes over a remote research station.

William F. Temple, was another forerunner of later Hammer films. Its story concerns two scientists, Bill (Stephen Murray) and Robin (John Van Eyssen), working in a laboratory set up in a remote country barn, who both love a girl named Lena (Barbara Payton). When Lena chooses Robin, Bill uses a duplicating machine developed in the barn lab to create an exact double of her. Bill names the double Helen (also played by Miss Payton). Unfortunately, being an exact duplicate Helen also falls in love with Robin! The plot is unresolved by a fire in the barn which destroys Bill, one of the girls, and the entire lab including the duplicator. The surviving girl—Helen or Lena—has no memory.

The second, *Spaceways*, adapted from Charles Eric Maine's radio play by Paul Taber and Richard Laundis (an American writer who worked on several of the Lippert co-productions) was basically a murder mystery with outer space backgrounds and quite simply, never overcame its severe budget limitations.

1953 saw *The Saint's* return with Louis Hayward re-creating his earlier role as Leslie Charteris' famous hero, *Blood Orange* with Tom Conway, *36 Hours* with Dan Daryles, *Face the Music* with Alex Nicol (as the trumpet-playing detective dubbed by Kenny Baker on the soundtrack), *The Heese Across the Lake* again with Alex Nicol, plus Hilary Brooke from the U.S.A. (with Ken Hughes directing his first film from his own screenplay of his own novel *'Might Wasn't*) *Life with the Lyons*—a re-entry into the pre-sold radio (and later TV) series, starring Ben, Bebe, Barbara and Richard Lyon. (A American comedy and forerunner of the many other television series spin-offs

that Hammer were to produce in the seventies), and Val Guest's first directing assignment for Hammer, *Monday by Proxy* and *Five Days*—both with Doree Clark back again.

A mixed bag of thrillers (with the comedy exception) as were the eight films produced in 1954.

The Stranger Came Home with Paulette Goddard, for which Michael Carreras wrote his first screenplay from a novel by actor George Sanders. *Third Party Risk* with Lloyd (Joe Forrester) Bridges, *Mask of Dust*—a motor racing drama with Richard Conte, *The Man of Sherwood Forest*—Hammer's first colour film with Don Taylor (now a successful Hollywood director) as Robin Hood, *The Lyons in Paris*—a second Lyons family situation comedy, *The Glass Cage* with John Ireland, *Break in the Circle*—second colour film with Forrest Tucker and Eva Bartok, and finally the forerunner to the new era ahead, *The Quatermass Experiment*, based on Nigel Kneale's fantastically successful BBC/TV serial, starring Brian Donlevy and directed by Val Guest.

Hammer knew they had a potential hit 'in the can' (but in film making there is that 'and being gap' between producing a picture and getting the audience reaction) and so, 1953 became a writing year. Except for *Women Without Men*—with Beverly Michaels as one of the many deprived female prison inmates, all feature production was halted, and existing scripts were discarded. With faith in what they had, Val Guest, Nigel Kneale and Jerry Sargater (who had worked himself up from tea boy to Production Manager during ten years in the production team, but had always wanted to write) were commissioned to write screenplays with

the 'new angle' in view.

Whilst this was happening a then 'new invention', the Cinemascope lens, was hired from its developers, 20th Century Fox, and Michael Carreras, who since he could stop his fingers had been a film of Big Band Swing, produced and directed a series of six, half-hour, musical entertainments, steering the current top talents of popular music. In some countries these were joined together as a feature release.

Additionally, three short story features: *The Right Person*, *A Man on the Beach*—directed by Joseph Losey (his first English film) and starring Donald Wolfitt, and *Dick Turpin*—Highwayman were produced. But all this was marking time until the worldwide release lull in '55 of *The Quatermass Experiment*. The spelling of 'Experiment' had been altered to emphasize the 'X' censorship rating that the film had received and the British public did the rest. Guest's and Kneale's mixture of science fiction and horror elements in equal parts was just what the avid audiences wanted. For once even the critics, who had never been Hammer fans were tongue-tied and *The Quatermass Experiment* became the most successful film that Hammer had produced (of the 44 features plus two 'Dick Turpin', six musical and three story features) and one privilege) since formation of the unit in late '47.

It also made its mark in the U.S.A. where it was released by United Artists as *The Creeping Unknown*. (Editor's note: For a full-length comic strip adaptation of this, Hammer's first *Monster Movie*, see *Hell 8 and 9*.)



Above: *The Song of Franklin*, produced in 1956 by popular singer of the time, Paul Robeson (center), we cover the film that was to change the style of horror. Lee to international studios.

And so, production in 1956 started with another X designed film entitled X-The Unknown from Jimmy Sangster's first screenplay and directed by Leslie Norman, starring Dean Jagger and Leo McKern.

Then, quite naturally, *Quatermass II* went into production with Gaumont directing from Kneale's script and Brian Donlevy again as Professor Quatermass.

Again trying something new, Hammer's third film that year was a war drama, *The Steel Bayonet*. Set in the western desert with a script based on the personal experiences of writer Howard Clowes, it starred Leo Genn, Kieron Moore and Michael Medwin, with Michael Carreras now directing his first feature length film (*The Suez Crisis* exploded the week before production and the War Office withdrew all Army support—we had to find tanks and weapons from private sources... in the end I had so many I could have started my own war.)

Hammer's newfound success brought opportunities for worldwide distribution deals with major companies, and *Exclusive* was gradually eliminated as a distributor in favour of Hammer as a production unit. X-The Unknown was *Exclusive*'s last feature release, and after that they only distributed a few more short subjects produced by themselves and Hammer.

Hammer, meanwhile, had found the subject matter they were looking for in order to take their next major step, and in late 1956 they filmed *The Curse of Frankenstein*. At that point, the history of Hammer began anew. Next issue we shall continue the first films of Hammer's "golden age".



Hammer's production, *Exclusive Films*, starred Right. Next issue, in our history of Hammer series, awaits for years to come and reeked Christopher The Horror of Dracula (1959).



CAN'T FACE IT AND THEY'LL NEVER TRACE ME.

CRONIN'S UNEXPECTED LOSS OF NERVE CONDEMNED HIS INJURED VICTIM TO DEATH...

AS SOON AS HE GOT HOME, CARLEY WASHED AWAY THE EVIDENCE.

THAT'S GODD... I DIDN'T NOTICE THAT SPOT OF BLOOD...



A WEEK LATER, JOHN CRONIN'S NIGHTMARE BEGINS.



WHAT THE HELL? CAN'T BE THIS SPOT OF BLOOD, CAN IT?



RETT! NO GETTING IN!

INSTANTLY TO PART IT SETS BURNING AND INSTANTLY IS PART I NEED...



THAT'S GOT RID OF THE FILTHY SAND IF IT WAS REALLY THERE!



BUT ONE MORNING, A NEEP LATER.

BY NO. IT'S THERE AGAIN AND FEELS LIKE IT JUST Oozed FROM THE GUY'S VEINS.



IS IT ON THE GLASS, OR IN MY MIND? GOT TO STOP THIS. BEFORE IT OVERTAKES ME, CARLEY!



SO LATER THE JUDGE DRY.

TAKEN A DRINKING TO THE CAR, HAVES YOU, BLUE?

YOU COULD SEE THAT? JUST FIX ME UP WITH ANOTHER ONE, RIGHT?

THE NEXT TWO HOURS WERE UNDISBURSED, AND CROUCH GOT HIS NERVE JACK.

UH-UH... THIS IS THE ROAD WHERE IT HAPPENED... BUT HELL, WHAT HAVES I GOT TO WORRY ABOUT?



THE ANSWER TO CROUCH'S QUESTION WAS... PLENTY.



OH GOD— AND G DOWNS THIS— WHAT DO THEY WANT WITH ME?

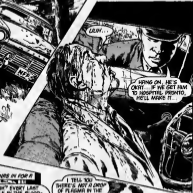


YOU EXPECTED CROUCH TO BE KILLED, DIDN'T YOU? IN, BUT YOU HAVEN'T HEARD THE END OF THE STORY YET...

ONE TERRIBLE-LOCKED MIND RAN ON THE MINDS... GREEN SURVIVED THE CAR INTO THE BUSH.



LEW...



HEING ON, HE'S ONLY... IF WE GET AHEAD TO HOSPITAL pronto, HE'LL MAKE IT...



THE PHYSICIAN GOT CROUCH TO THE HOSPITAL ON TIME.

HE'S LOST A LOT OF BLOOD. HE'LL NEED AN IMMEDIATE TRANSFUSION.



I'LL GET A BOTTLE OF PLESMAR...

BUT THE HOSPITAL BRANCHMAN PARS IN FOR A SHOCK...

HEH? EVERY LAST BOTTLE IN THE BLOOD-BANK EMPTIED. OVER-TURNED... EMPTIED!



I TELL YOU THERE'S NOT A DROP OF PLESMAR IN THE HOSPITAL!



THEN WE'VE LOST THE PRESIDENT! WITHOUT THAT TRANSFUSION— AND CROUCH IS A DEAD MAN...

DON'T ASK ME NOW THE BLOOD-BANK GOT EMPTIED? THE NEW HOBBI SAYS IT WAS THE FAULT OF THE TECHNICIAN WHO HAD THIS JOB BEFORE ME... THE ONE WHO DIED LAST MONTH ON THAT NET-AND-RUN ACCIDENT...

THE END

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Tears of Evil strip, The Green, Kelliff, The Werewolf Female Vampires, Devil's Man, Wonder Woman, etc.



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